



600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-2736

## Council work session agenda

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**Thursday, July 9, 2020**

**2:00 PM**

**<https://zoom.us/j/94940131997> or  
**877-853-5257 (toll free)****

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### **2:00 Call to Order and Roll Call**

#### **Work Session Topics:**

2:05 Willamette Cove Work Session [20-5438](tel:503-543-2050)

Presenter(s): Portland Harbor Community Coalition Members

Attachments: [Work Session Worksheet](#)  
[Willamette Cove Overview](#)  
[Alternatives within DEQ Staff Report](#)

**3:05 Chief Operating Officer Communication**

**3:10 Councilor Communication**

**3:15 Adjourn**

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**Willamette Cove Work Session**

*Work Session Topics*

Metro Council Work Session  
Thursday, July 9, 2020

**[STAFF REPORT FOR USE FOR WORK SESSIONS AND COUNCIL MEETINGS]**

**A COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON THE WILLAMETTE COVE SITE**

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Date: 6/10/20  
Department: Parks and Nature  
Meeting Date: July 9, 2020

Prepared by: Jon Blasher  
Presenter: Jon Blasher  
Length: 10 minutes

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**ISSUE STATEMENT**

The Metro Council would like to learn about the history of Willamette Cove, discuss opportunities to develop public access, and hear from the Portland Harbor Community Coalition about their interest in the site.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

No Action Requested or Timeline Proposed

**IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

Unknown

**POLICY QUESTION(S)**

- 1.) What types of recreational opportunities does the current remedial option allow for in the upland?
- 2.) Does the Metro Council desire to allow for additional recreational opportunities in the upland? If so what are those opportunities?
- 3.) Who should be the long term operator of this site?

**POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER**

Because this is a Council conversation with Community members there are not specific policy options for Council to consider.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Because this is a Council conversation, there are no staff recommendations

**STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

- How is this related to Metro’s Strategic Plan (to be developed in 2019) or Core Mission? In regard to the core mission of Metro Parks and Nature cleanup for this site would follow all appropriate guidance to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat. Upon completion of the selected upland cleanup remedy, this would create

an opportunity to enjoy nature close to home through a regional trail and protected natural area. The discussion concerning the future vision for the Willamette Cove site, and required clean up action, could relate to the agency-wide mission to plan for the region's future and ensure that this region remains a great place to live.

- How does this advance Metro's racial equity goals? This work session would include invited testimony from Portland Harbor Community Coalition; this is only one group requesting time at this work session. PHCC includes individual community groups -- the Indigenous community, African-Americans/Black Community, immigrants, and the houseless community. One of PHCC's goals would be the "development of Community Benefit Agreements between impacted communities, polluters and government to ensure equity provisions are implemented during and following cleanup." Advancement of Metro's racial and community equity goals could include hearing from all concerned and affected community stakeholders at a future time.
- How does this advance Metro's climate action goals?
  - Any cleanup action taken within Metro's Willamette Cove site affords the opportunity to increase carbon sequestration. Restoration post cleanup will increase the urban tree canopy by planting native trees and enhancing natural existing habitat
  - Riparian and shallow water habitat restoration that will occur during the in-water clean-up phase will improve habitat conditions and resilience for salmon and steelhead that move through the area en route to spawning grounds upriver
- Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback This session follows a letter submitted to the Metro Council February 26<sup>th</sup>, signed by 15 groups and/or individuals. Other active community stakeholders were not signatories to this letter. Expected opposition would be from groups which have not been invited to testify at this work session.
- Explicit list of stakeholder groups and individuals who have been involved in policy development.
  - Currently there have been the following stakeholders involved in coordinated public engagement regarding the upland remedy selection process for Willamette Cove:
    - Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group
    - Portland Harbor Community Coalition
    - Oregon Health Authority
    - Environmental Protection Agency
    - Port of Portland
    - Metro
    - Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
  - Over the course of the upland cleanup investigation since 2001, there have been stakeholders participating over time, in addition to those listed above. These have included:
    - npGreenway
    - Cathedral Park Neighborhood Association
    - St. Johns Neighborhood Association

- City of Portland Parks and Recreation
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- State Representative Tina Kotek
- Department of State Lands
- Portland Harbor Natural Resource Trustees:
  - Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
  - Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
  - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
  - Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
  - Nez Perce Tribe
  - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
  
- Legal Antecedents  
Not applicable at this time.
- Anticipated Effects  
This opportunity for one group to provide testimony regarding a future vision could lead to an involved, broad, community driven dialogue about the Willamette Cove site.
- Financial Implications (current year and ongoing)  
Is this item in the current budget?  
Since there is not a determined action at this point nothing has been budgeted in the current budget. However, there could be large financial implications for various clean up options as well as long term maintenance.

## **BACKGROUND**

Not previously brought before Council. The current concerns center on the public comment period process for the upland remedy selection process currently overseen by Oregon DEQ for the Willamette Cove upland site.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- May 19, 2020 Memo 'Willamette Cove Overview'
- May 22, 2020 Memo 'Willamette Cove Alternatives within DEQ Staff Report for Upland Remedy Selection'

[For work session:]

- Is legislation required for Council action?  Yes  No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached?  Yes  No
- What other materials are you presenting today? [INSERT]





# Memo

Date: May 19, 2020  
To: Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature Director  
From: Dan Moeller, Conservation Program Director  
Subject: Willamette Cove Overview

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**BACKGROUND:** The Willamette Cove property comprises approximately 27 acres and approximately 3000 feet of Willamette River shoreline. The low-lying riverfront property is on the northern bank of the Willamette River between the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Bridge and the St. Johns Bridge, north of downtown Portland. Metro purchased the property in 1996 under the 1995 Open Spaces Bond Measure, as one of the first greenspaces to be protected under this measure. Portland's Cathedral Park Neighborhood occupies the terrace above Willamette Cove.

Ownership History: shared history from community members have noted this area was a frequent travel route for multiple tribes moving along the rivers. The majority of the native peoples were moved to the Grand Ronde in the 1850's.

The Port of Portland took ownership of much of the area in the early 1900's, as design work for the Burlington Northern Railroad bridge began. Much of what is now the inner cove was land mass excavated to support the land spit for the new bridge, which opened in 1908. Parcels of land within what is now the Metro Willamette Cove site were owned by the Port and various commercial industries during the next few decades.

The City of Portland purchased the site in the 1990's for development but in 1995 sold the property to the Trust for Public Lands, which in turn transferred the property to Metro. Using funds from the 1995 Open Spaces Bond Measure program Metro purchased the land in 1996 after receiving a report that there were no unacceptable risks to human or ecological health. The property was to be managed by Portland Parks as a natural area, with a regional trail designed and built by Metro.

Portland Parks began a master planning process and drafted a site management plan, which was never formally adopted once the site was brought into the Portland Harbor Superfund study area.

Also: Oct. 1998 - On-site Superfund cleanup activities at McCormick & Baxter site begin which included the protective barrier installed at Willamette Cove.

Willamette Cove's industrial uses date back to the early 1900s. Industrial activities ended by the late 1960s and the site has been vacant since. Soil, groundwater, and sediment contamination have been confirmed on-site. Metro and the Port of Portland entered into a voluntary agreement with DEQ for a remedial investigation and source control measures.

The site is currently closed to the public, but use of the property for recreational purposes is known to occur. Unimproved roads and trails traverse the property and a few trails reach the Willamette River. Foundation concrete and other remnants from the site's industrial past remain at many locations. Working railroad tracks border the northern and eastern boundaries of the property.

### **Environmental history**

This site was used from 1901 into the late 1960s as a lumber mill, plywood mill, barrel manufacturer, dry-dock and ship repair facility for a variety of small businesses. These past uses left contamination including heavy metals, diesel fuel, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and dioxins in soil in most of the Willamette Cove property. Some of these contaminants have been identified as unacceptable risks to users of the property. Some environmental cleanup has been completed, including removal of contaminated soil in the site upland and beach in 1999, 2004, 2008, and 2016. Significant environmental contamination remains in both the upland and the Willamette River adjoining the property which requires remedial action.

Wood preservative chemicals from the adjacent McCormick & Baxter site have migrated in sediment (and possibly groundwater) onto the southern portion of Willamette Cove and Willamette River. In 2002 and 2003 DEQ completed a large remediation project to address the contaminant plume from the McCormick & Baxter site through the use of a subsurface barrier wall and engineered sediment cap. DEQ continues to monitor the remedy for site regularly.

### **Current risk assessment and remediation planning**

Environmental work is being completed on a number of fronts. An ecological and a human health risk assessment was completed and approved by DEQ in 2014. The feasibility study and source control evaluation regarding the release of upland contamination into the river was submitted by the Port and Metro to DEQ in April of 2019. DEQ completed their staff report and the proposed upland remedy is currently in the public comment period. The staff report and preferred remedy alternative can be found here: [DEQ Staff Report 2019](#). Once a remedy is selected, the remedial design period will begin. This is expected to occur over the next two years. On Jan. 6, 2017, EPA released its [Record of Decision \(ROD\) for Portland Harbor](#) that presents the cleanup remedy for the in-water portion of Willamette Cove within the Superfund Site. The State of Oregon concurred with EPA's Record of Decision. The in-water remedial design process is currently underway. It is expected that over the course of the next four years both the upland and in-water remedy designs will be completed and joint remediation construction projects would occur.

Sampling and the risk assessments have identified contaminants in soil across the site presenting a risk to site users or wildlife. The most prominent risk is from dioxins present in the central portion of the Willamette Cove upland. The preferred alternative in the DEQ Staff Report would remove highly-concentrated contamination ("hot spots") unable to be addressed during the 2016 removal action, consolidate the remaining contamination and install a cap within a portion of the site. Once the public comment period is concluded, a final remedy will be selected by DEQ.

### **Potential Threats at the Property**

Exposure pathways of greatest concern for Willamette Cove are: 1) direct contact with or ingestion of contaminated (upland) site soils; 2) direct contact with the numerous physical and safety hazards on the East Parcel Beach, including underwater hazards, buried metal rebar and other debris; 3) consumption of "resident fish" caught by recreational anglers. Resident fish are those that live their entire lives in the Harbor and do not migrate out to the ocean or other waters. Resident fish include bass, carp and catfish, but not salmon, steelhead or lamprey.

Signage has been posted at Willamette Cove indicating the presence of contamination. Metro has made efforts to secure the site to the extent possible including hiring private security firms to enforce rules at

times when Metro staff is not working. Use of the property is discouraged until cleanup activities have been completed.

### **Public Process**

DEQ, the Port, Metro, EPA, and the Oregon Health Authority are working with community groups such as the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group and the Portland Harbor Community Coalition during the public comment period to improve public engagement. To date PHCC and the communities they represent have expressed strong interest in seeing a significant expansion to public access at Willamette Cove including access to the beach for swimming and fishing as well as other activities related to river recreation. Metro's position is that the only public access Metro is positioned to provide, from both a feasibility and role-in-the-region perspective, is a corridor for the North Portland Greenway trail so that it can be constructed when that time comes. If another public entity, like the city of Portland whose jurisdiction Willamette Cove is located, is interested in either operating or owning the site, then Metro would support that entity pursuing the possibility of constructing access and facilities to support more intensive recreational activities consistent with other parks in their city and system, after the remediation of the contamination of the uplands, riverbank and sediment are complete.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommend that Metro leadership and Council continue to support Metro's current position that access to the site will be limited the North Portland Greenway Trail as long as Metro remains the owner and/or operator of the site.



# Memo

Date: May 22, 2020  
To: Dan Moeller, Conservation Program Director  
From: Katy Weil, Senior Scientist  
Subject: Willamette Cove: Alternatives within DEQ Staff Report for Upland Remedy Selection

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**Background:** Oregon DEQ has prepared a staff report analyzing various alternatives for an upland remedy to remediate human health and ecological risk at the Willamette Cove upland site. The upland site area is located within Metro’s property between the top of the riverbank north to the Union Pacific tracks, east to the BNSF railroad tracks, and west to N. Richmond.

### **Willamette Cove Upland Remedy Alternatives: DEQ Staff Report**

DEQ completed their staff report with a detailed description of remedy alternatives with a preferred alternative noted. The staff report can be found here: [DEQ Staff Report 2019](#).

There are ten alternatives described in the staff report, ranging from a “no action” alternative to full removal of contaminated material present within the uplands. These are fully described in the linked report, pages 40 – 47.

DEQ evaluated all alternatives based upon the following factors: protectiveness, effectiveness, long-term reliability, practicality of implementation, implementation risk, and reasonableness of cost.

These alternatives are outlined, below:

**Alternative 1:** No Action – noted for comparative purposes only.

**Alternative 2a:** Standard Cap – engineered 2+ ft. cap over entire upland. Monitoring and controls needed. Cost 8.2 million.

**Alternative 2b:** Amended Cap – 1+ft amended soil cap over contaminated areas. Institutional controls needed. Cost 5.5 million

**Alternative 3a:** Standard Excavation and Offsite Disposal – complete removal of contaminated soil above human health and ecological risk levels with offsite disposal in a regulated landfill. Requires removal of all vegetation, including native trees (including rare oak and madrone). Site use would be unrestricted after this remedy is completed. Cost 11.3 million.

**Alternative 3b:** Alternative Excavation and Offsite Disposal – complete removal and offsite disposal as noted in 3a above, except in areas where native trees are present. Site use would be unrestricted. However, it is important to note that in the event native trees are removed based upon selected regional trail design and installation contamination at that level would need to be addressed. Cost 10.7 million.

**Alternative 3c:** Standard Excavation and Onsite Consolidation –all contaminated soil would be excavated and consolidated on site under a three foot soil cap. No contaminated material would be moved off site. The consolidation area would be large, require long term monitoring and maintenance. The remainder of the site would have unrestricted access. Cost 10.4 million

**Alternative 3d:** Standard Excavation, Offsite Disposal and Consolidation - certain contaminants removed for offsite disposal, remainder consolidated and capped on site. Large capped area to be monitored and maintained long term. The remainder of the site would have unrestricted access. Cost 10.9 million.

**Alternative 4a:** Focused standard excavation, offsite disposal, standard cap – excavation of hot spot level contamination disposed offsite, in-place capping of remainder which would be all of the upland. All vegetation would be removed. Access would be restricted. Cost 9.5 million.

**Alternative 4b:** Focused Alternative Excavation, Offsite Disposal, Amended Cap – hot spot contaminant removal and offsite disposal with installation of a thin amended soil cap. Restricted public access. Cost 5.9 million.

**Alternative 4c:** Focused Alternative Excavation, Offsite Disposal, Onsite Consolidation, and Cap – human health hot spot material removed with offsite disposal, remaining contamination consolidated on site and capped, residual ecological risk (to animals, for example) covered with clean topsoil. Access would be restricted via institutional controls, signage, and long term monitoring of the capped consolidation area would be required. Cost 8.8 million.

### **DEQ Preferred Remedy**

DEQ selected Alternative 4c as their preferred alternative and the public are now commenting on that selection. This remedy option “is a hybrid of technologies, which provides a protective and cost-effective approach to remove and contain contaminated soil, including hot spots. Alternative 4c foremost will restore the site to protective conditions, and in comparison of the remedy selection balancing factors outranked the other potential alternatives.” DEQ chose Alternative 4c as their preferred remedy as a balance and because it is most easily and safely implementable while retaining protectiveness. This does not mean that alternatives 3a nor 3b could not be selected after the public process is complete, but these alternatives would require utmost diligence and monitoring to be completed safely and are not without a high environmental cost in the form of carbon footprint.

Alternatives 3a and 3b are of most interest to those who want to see full unrestricted public access. It is very important to note, however, that those alternatives come with a cost more than just dollars and cents. In Alternative 3a, all vegetation would be removed over 790,000 sq. ft of the site. While 3b would protect the native trees and potentially allow for unrestricted public access, there is a concern for the site owner. In the event the planned regional trail or other park improvement were to be implemented and the native vegetation previously preserved under this alternative were removed, then the underlying non-addressed contamination would require characterization and cleanup.

Materials following this page were distributed at the meeting.

Concerning the Willamette Cove workshop –

One of the missing items concerning Willamette Cove is the placement of hazardous material upland. This is important because as part of the City of Portland Transportation System Plan, the Willamette Blvd. bridge is scheduled for replacement (currently unfunded). This bridge alignment could impact the hazardous materials. It is a consideration that the University Park Neighborhood Association has brought up before but which should also be considered by Metro. The bridge would be realigned to remove a dangerous curve and is a 2 on a private bridge safety scale (far lower than the Sellwood bridge). Another consideration is the Baxter-McCormick superfund site and its potential use. It is industrially zoned and was included in the University of Portland Master Plan as a potential recreational area but UP has not leased or purchased the property, so it could become an industrial site. It would be adjacent to the Willamette Cove and could significantly impact the Cove especially any recreational uses of the Cove.

Tom Karwaki

Transportation and Land Use Committee Chair

University Park Neighborhood Association

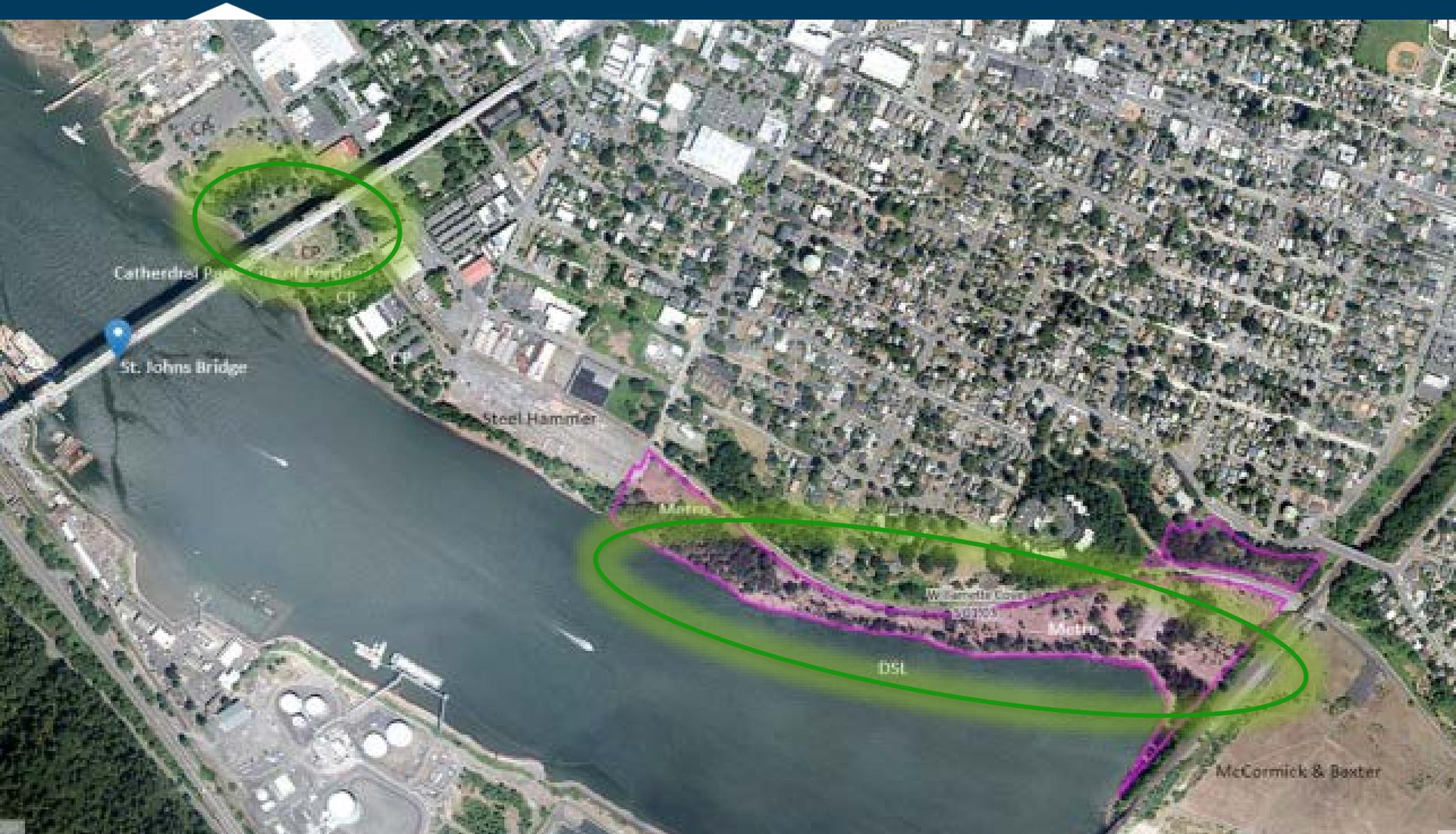
253.318.2075 cell/tex

# Metro's Willamette Cove Site: Clean up and Conservation



Metro Council Work Session  
July 9, 2020

# North Portland Area



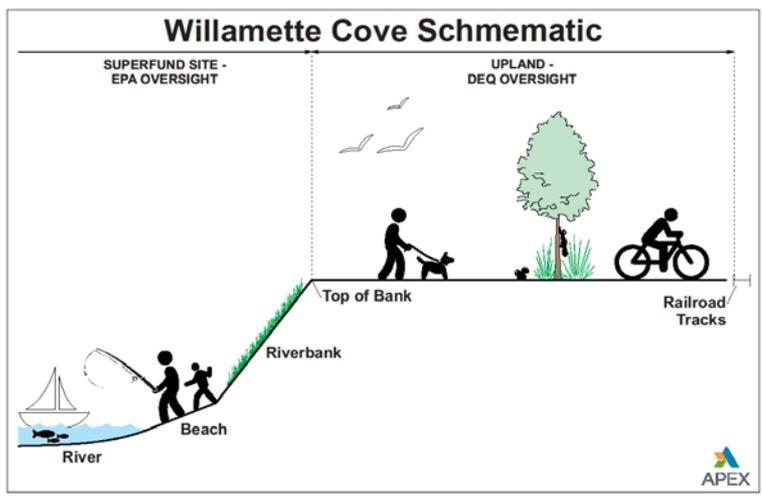
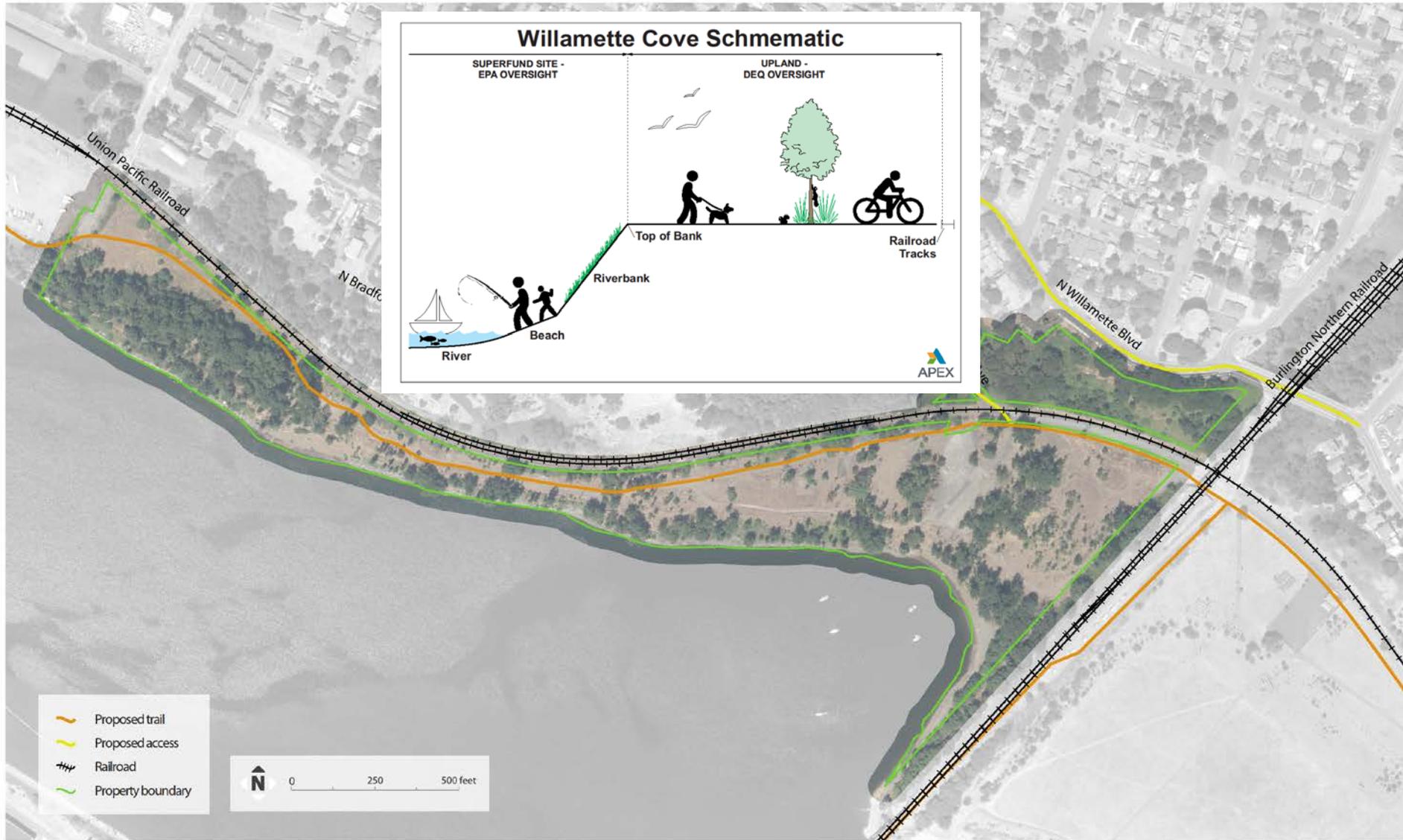
# Willamette Cove Upland Site



Metro



# Willamette Cove Upland Site



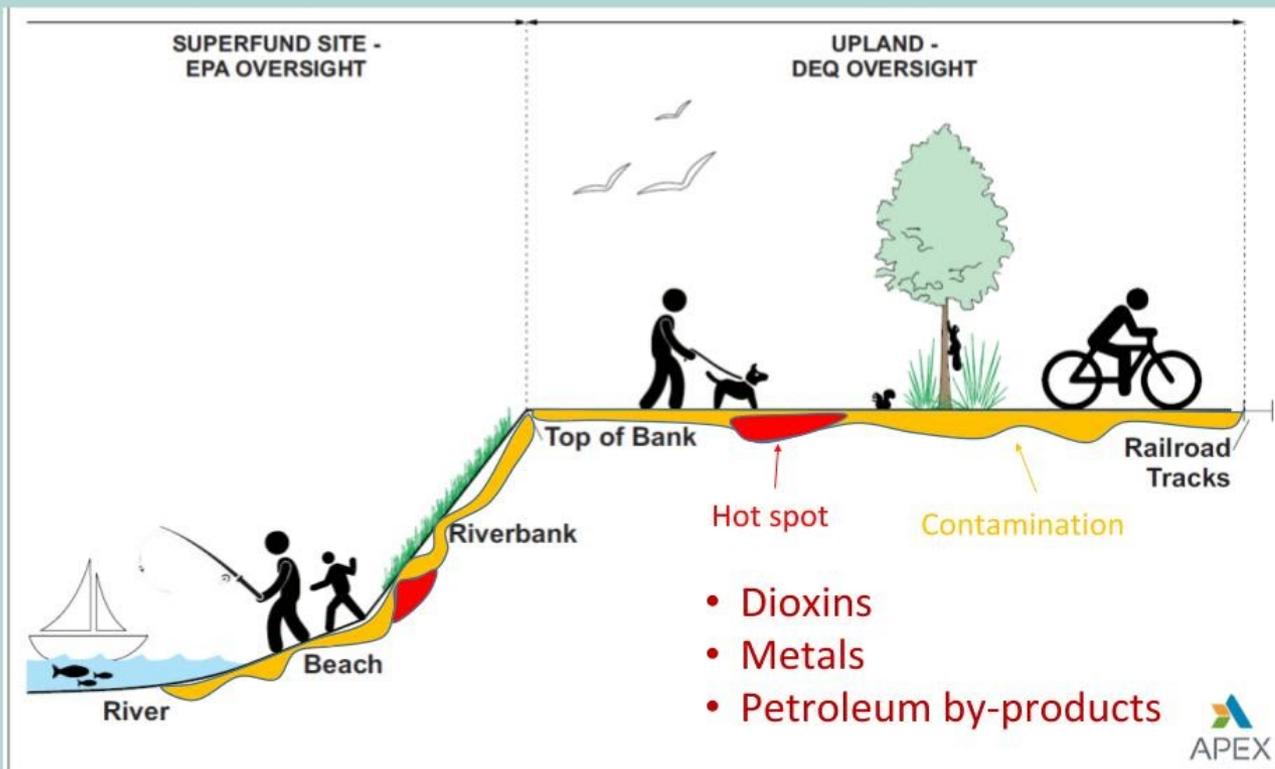
# Current Site Use

- **Site Closure: 2013 OHA Health Advisory**
- **Contaminant Removal Actions: 2008, 2016**
- **Daily Site Security**
- **Camp Cleanups and RID Program**



# Upland Clean-Up Options

## What contaminants are present?



**Risk Levels**  
are assessed  
for types of  
exposure in  
**both humans**  
and **animals**

# Clean-Up Options

## Clean Up Methods:

- Removal
- Capping
- Consolidation

## Considerations:

- Safety
- Carbon Footprint
- Protectiveness
- Native Tree Protection



# Clean-Up Options

Alternatives	Soil Removal	Public Use	Cost	Native Trees Preserved
1 No Action				
2a Full Cap	No	Restricted	8.2 mil	
2b Mostly Cap	No	Restricted	5.5 mil	Yes
3a Full Removal	Yes	Unrestricted	11.3 mil	
3b Mostly Removal	Yes	Unrestricted	10.7 mil	Yes
3c Full Consolidation	No	Unrestricted in certain areas	10.4 mil	
3d Removal + Consolidation	Some	Unrestricted in certain areas	10.9 mil	
4a Removal + Cap	Yes	Restricted	9.5 mil	
4b Removal + Amended Cap	Yes	Restricted	5.9 mil	Yes
4c Removal + Con + Cap	Yes	Restricted partially, Some passive park use	8.8 mil	Yes

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